

Action Research Project

Process Overview

Increasing Diverse Students Communication Skills with Blogging

- 1. Setting the Foundation-** Collaborating with my site mentor, colleagues, and looking at specific student needs assisted me as I examined possible areas for an action research plan. Students in the 4th grade at our campus tend to struggle with communicating effectively with others, and this in turn impacts their ability to write successfully on standardized writing tests. The group that I will be working with will be 4th graders from the 2012-2013 school years on my campus.
- 2. Analyzing Data-** I will use data from both formal and informal assessments. Students will be asked to write authentic pieces which will be used to first create a benchmark, mid-year progress assessment, and end of the year progress assessment. Student data will also be used from the 2011-2012 school year's STAAR writing test scores to compare STAAR writing test scores from the 2012-2013 school year's progress.
- 3. DEVELOPING DEEPER UNDERSTANDING** – During the gathering of information, I will meet with my mentor and discuss the results of the data. I will use this data and meeting times to look for other questions or areas of concern for the project. I will also examine other avenues to assist students as they are working on their communication skills.
- 4. ENGAGE IN SELF-REFLECTION** – Some of the questions that I will be asking myself during this project are:
 - If we have positive results in our research study, how can we implement the strategies to other grade levels to help students from similar backgrounds communicate successfully?
 - If we have those students who do not respond well to blogging, is there a different type of technology that could be use to engage those learners?
 - Would students from non low socioeconomic status have the same rate of growth by using this tool for building communication skills?
 - Can we provide professional development to the staff using our research and data collection?

5. Exploring Programmatic Patterns – After reflecting on my project and discussing it with my mentor and colleagues, there are a few areas of concern that may pose difficulty in my project. One of those is the lack of technological support in their home environment. Many of my students do not have internet access or a computer in their home. Another issue that may arise is finding the time during the school day for my students to use the computers at the school to blog with each other.

6. Determining Direction –

A. Are you clear on what you are attempting to solve (your research questions)?

Yes, I have an understanding of the research questions, and how I am going to attempt to solve these problems.

B. Have you adequately addressed the skills and resources questions?

At this point in time, I feel that I have firm grasp on the skills that I am attempting to implement in my research project.

C. Have you established a collaborative approach to the issue?

Yes, I have an established collaborative approach to this issue. I have spoken with my mentor many times about what I am hoping to learn from this project. I have also incorporated the assistance of other teachers with experiences in using blogs in their classrooms.

D. Are your timelines realistic?

Yes, my timelines are realistic. Standardized testing has concluded for the 2011-2012 school years, therefore, I will begin my research project at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school years.

E. Do you have a reasonable plan to monitor the project?

I will be using a self created spreadsheet to monitor progress in spelling, word usage, subject/verb agreement, and overall sentence structure. I will be also giving feedback on the blog to the students throughout the length of the project.

F. Do you have a reasonable plan for determining the level of success – how do you evaluate if the plan is effective?

I will be using a graphing program to demonstrate the rate at which the different areas of focus improve or remain the same.

G. How will you revise and improve the plan based on monitoring and evaluation?

At the beginning of my project, I am going to allow the students to blog about anything that they have learned in class during the week, and one blog posting that will be their choice. If this becomes too difficult for some students to create these open postings, I will create a broad topic for them to write about. I will begin to scale this scaffolding back as the students gain confidence in their writing abilities.

7. Taking Action for School Improvement- The progress of this action research plan will be shared with other grade levels. Input will be requested from each of the grade levels involved (2nd - 4th) for what they use with their students to increase communication skills.

8. Sustained Improvement- This action research plan will be a work in progress. I will use the data to assist students in different areas to continue to increase their ability to communicate effectively with others.